

TC ABSTRACT

I. Basic Project Data

▪ Country/Region:	REGIONAL/IDB
▪ TC Name:	Accelerating learning outcomes for vulnerable youths through tutoring and mentoring programs.
▪ TC Number:	RG-T4136
▪ Team Leader/Members:	ZOIDO LOBATON, PABLO (SCL/EDU) Team Leader; THOMPSON, JENNELLE (SCL/EDU) Alternate Team Leader; CASTRO DE SOUZA MAROTTA, LUANA (SCL/EDU) Alternate Team Leader; GONZALO ALMEYDA (SCL/EDU); FELIPE FERNANDO SARMIENTO CALDAS (SCL/EDU); MOLINA DE DARDON, GABRIELA MARIA (CID/CES); CAROLINA HERNANDEZ (SCL/EDU); NATALIA ALMEIDA (LEG/SGO); EMILIO LAGUILLO GUTIERREZ (SCL/EDU); BLASCO, IVANA (SCL/EDU)
▪ Taxonomy:	Client Support
▪ Number and name of operation supported by the TC:	N/A
▪ Date of TC Abstract:	14 Jul 2022
▪ Beneficiary:	Ministries of Education of Ecuador and Dominican Republic
▪ Executing Agency:	INTER-AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK
▪ IDB funding requested:	US\$500,000.00
▪ Local counterpart funding:	US\$55,000.00 (In Kind)
▪ Disbursement period:	24 months
▪ Types of consultants:	Individuals; Firms
▪ Prepared by Unit:	SCL/EDU - Education
▪ Unit of Disbursement Responsibility:	SCL/EDU - Education
▪ TC included in Country Strategy (y/n):	No
▪ TC included in CPD (y/n):	No
▪ Alignment to the Update to the Institutional Strategy 2010-2020:	Social inclusion and equality

II. Objective and Justification

- 2.1 The Project seeks to support the protection of education trajectories of vulnerable youths between 9-14 years old by accelerating the recovery of learning outcomes that were lost due to school closure policies in order to mitigate exposure to COVID-19. This goal will be achieved through the provision of personalized tutoring and mentoring sessions that help increase academic performance in mathematics, reducing inter-annual drop-out rates and promoting progression rates.
- 2.2 The COVID-19 crisis affected the education systems in Latin America and the Caribbean, which during 2020 kept their schools closed for approximately 231 days impacting on education trajectories of almost 158 million students in the region (UNICEF, 2021). Policies of school closure had negative impacts on students. Estimations show that around 3.5 million youths will drop-out from school, a reduction of 1.7% on the assistance rate (Szekely et al., 2022). Moreover, the World Bank (2021) estimated that the proportion of youths with low academic performance could increase in 19 p.p. for Ecuador and 11 p.p. for Dominican Republic.
- 2.3 Given this context, the TC will support the efforts of Ecuador and Dominican Republic to recover from COVID-19. These countries were selected due to their needs and

political dialogue with government authorities. Moreover, in Dominican Republic they are finishing a pilot study, and this TC would help enlarge the pilot to evaluate the possibility of institutionalization and scalability. In Ecuador, the national government have largely invested in hybrid and flexible models and have directly asked the Bank to be part of the study. These two countries will benefit from the same project as evidence have shown that it is a cost-efficient mechanism to accelerate learning and recover what was lost during the pandemic.

- 2.4 This TC will use tutoring mechanisms – using phone SMS and calls – as they are shown to be an opportunity for accelerating learning outcomes at scale (Carvalho et al, 2020). These types of programs had great results at international levels, achieving impacts as high as 0.37 SD in learning outcomes of students if they are implemented with small groups, and with tutors that are professionals or volunteers trained with highly structured guidelines (Angrist et al., 2020a). Moreover, in LAC, tutoring programs have been found to motivate students to remain at school, promote attendance and academic performance, especially in those youths that have high risk of dropping-out (Barrera –Osorio et al., 2018).
- 2.5 The TC leverages lessons learnt from tutoring programs implemented in El Salvador, México, Guatemala, and Argentina, where tutors are selected among volunteers from universities, and who provided 20 minutes phone calls once a week and sent SMS reminders for a period of 8 weeks. First analysis shows that there was an increase of children and youth that can solve division problems of around 42 p.p.. This is positive as it shows that there is an impact on learning coming from tutoring and thus, can be replicated to other settings such as Ecuador and Dominican Republic in which we expect similar results.
- 2.6 This TC is a priority for the SCL and EDU as it is aligned to the Skills Development Sector Framework. It promotes technology usage to increase access to skills development, strengthen the efficiency of the education systems and develop evidence to be used on decision-making. The products of the TC would be of great value to determine the scaling capacity of the program, vital to create or pursue new operations. Also, the TC is aligned with the Bank's Vision 2025 since it considers the promotion of social progress, gender equality and diversity. Finally, this TC is consistent with the Second Update of the Institutional Strategy as it is aligned with the strategic area that promotes the use of technology and innovation and the transversal axis of gender equality, diversity, and inclusion.

III. Description of Activities and Outputs

- 3.1 **Component I: Strengthening capabilities of tutors.** This component has the objective of designing and implementing the training programs each tutor will follow in order for them to provide adequate tutoring and mentoring to vulnerable youths by phone. This component will finance: i) Development of the training plan, manual, and agenda for each country, and ii) Training activities (e.g., training webinars, practice pilots, trainers).
- 3.2 **Component II: Implementation of tutoring and mentoring pilots.** This component has the objective to provide vulnerable youths with remote tutoring to increase their learning outcomes. This component will finance: i) Design of contents, ii) Resources needed for the implementation of the program, iii) Tutor's stipend to incentivize their participation in the program, (iv) Design of a results-based financing mechanism and allocation of resources for an incentive tranche to be disbursed upon the achievement of intended results, and (v) Program management.
- 3.3 **Component III: Monitoring, evaluation and knowledge products.** This component has the objective to supervise the adequate implementation of the tutoring and mentoring programs and timely correct any issues hindering the implementation. This

component will finance technical assistance to develop the impact evaluation including: i) Impact evaluation strategy, ii) Design, pilot and analysis of the tools and instruments needed to evaluate the program, iii) Documents related to the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the program.

- 3.4 **Component IV: Communications and results dissemination strategy.** This component has the objective to develop and implement a communication strategy and all its activities in order to disseminate the results and products that the program will produce. This component will finance: i) Dissemination spaces with different stakeholders to discuss lessons learnt (e.g., webinars, conferences), ii) Communication products (e.g., videos, podcasts, photos, infographics).

IV. Budget

Indicative Budget

Activity/Component	IDB/Fund Funding	Counterpart Funding	Total Funding
Strengthening capabilities of tutors	US\$80,000.00	US\$0.00	US\$80,000.00
Implementation of tutoring and mentoring pilots	US\$240,000.00	US\$55,000.00	US\$295,000.00
Monitoring, evaluation and knowledge products	US\$100,000.00	US\$0.00	US\$100,000.00
Communications and results dissemination strategy	US\$80,000.00	US\$0.00	US\$80,000.00
Total	US\$500,000.00	US\$55,000.00	US\$555,000.00

V. Executing Agency and Execution Structure

- 5.1 The Inter-American Development Bank will be the executing agency of the Technical Cooperation as requested by the beneficiary countries through their letters requesting for support. In this capacity, the IDB Team will work directly through periodic meetings with the Ministries of Education and the relevant implementing partners to determine the target population, operational structure and adaptations to the basic intervention to meet the beneficiaries' specific needs.
- 5.2 The Bank counts on a great amount of experience in implementing cost-effective interventions that seek to accelerate and recover learning outcomes using technology. The Bank has led a strategy in Honduras to promote and support distant learning to more than 3,000 youths by using the digital platform Kolibri (RG-T3742). Additionally, the Bank is currently implementing tutoring programs to support mathematics learning by phone calls in El Salvador, Mexico, Guatemala and Argentina, which is benefitting around 1,800 youths per country (RG-T3766, BK-A1625, RG-E1743). This experience from the Bank guarantees and adequate and strong implementation of the TC and assures that results serve as inputs for decision making on whether the programs are scalable and for the design of future operations of the Bank, also it helps to strengthen the political dialogue with the countries as well as developing technical capabilities of the countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- 5.3 Procurement. The activities to be executed in all components will be contracted in accordance with the Bank's policies as follow: (a) AM-650 for Individual consultants; (b) Policy for Selection and Contracting of Consulting Firms for Bank-executed Operational Work (GN-2765-1) and its Operational Guidelines (OP-1155-4); AND (c) gn-2303-20 for logistics and other related services.
- 5.4 Visibility of JSF. In keeping with Annex 1 of the April 2016 Operating Guidance for the JSF, once the TC is approved, a joint press release will be issued by the Bank and

Government of Japan through the Japanese Embassy of the participating Countries. The press release will include the financial contribution from the Government of Japan and provide a summary of the project objective and activities of the TC that will address COVID-19 in the participating countries. Additionally, component IV of the TC will allow to organize a launch event where Japanese ambassador for the benefited countries can participate. Also, this component allows for the organization of international meetings presenting the results of the tutoring programs to other countries in the region for which we would provide visibility to Japan through the participation of their authorities in the country (e.g. ambassador) if available. Moreover, all communication and knowledge products will always have the logo of the Japan Special Fund to recognize their support to the program. Finally, the team is in touch with representatives of JICA in both of the beneficiary countries (e.g. Ecuador, Dominican Republic) in order to find potential areas of interest and opportunities to collaborate.

VI. Project Risks and Issues

- 6.1 Given that tutoring and mentoring programs will be implemented through virtual or hybrid mechanisms, it is important to consider the technological gaps that exist in the targeted countries and population. To solve this issue, the programs will be implemented through phone calls and SMS texting. Both technologies have high levels of coverage and penetration in Ecuador and Dominican Republic. Considering that the tutoring and mentoring programs is carried out by a third party, past experiences have shown that families of the target population could have high levels of suspicion on the real goal of the program, leading participants to drop-out or rejection from the program. To account for this issue, the Bank will build a strong relationship with the Ministry of Education and other stakeholders from the area, which allows it to provide legitimacy and trust to the program and the implementation team. The tutoring program relies on a one-to-one mechanism to provide academic support through phone. Thus, there is the risk that tutors – if not selected correctly – could pose as a threat to children wellbeing. To solve this, volunteered tutors will be selected from a pool of university students that were enrolled in the pedagogic department, will follow a thorough selection process by interview and those who pass will participate in a rigorous training workshop. Additionally, during the implementation tutoring lessons by phone, the children should be accompanied always by an adult and the phone must be on speaker phone so there is transparency on everything the tutor communicates to the child.

VII. Environmental and Social Classification

- 7.1 The ESG classification for this operation is "undefined".